

Message Text

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TAGS:

SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION

FORMER LEADER OF THE BANNED UNITED PROGRESSIVE PARTY (UPP),
SIMON KAPWEPWE AND FOUR OF HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE REJOINED THE RULING
UNITED NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY (UNIP) IN WHAT IS VIEWED HERE
AS A MAJOR AND DRAMATIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT.

MR KAPWEPWE, 55, AND FOUR OF HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE FORMER UPP,
JUSTIN CHIMBA, JOHN CHISATA, PETER CHANDA AND MUSONDA CHAMBESHI,
REFJOIN UNIP, ZAMBIA'S ONLY LEGAL POLITICAL PARTY, AFTER WHAT HAS
BEEN DESCRIBED BY THE LOCAL PRESS AS AN UNPRECEDENTED MEETING
WITH ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT KENNETH KAUNDA AT STATE HOUSE
YESTERDAY.

IN THE DRAMATIC MOVE, WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY HERALDS A NEW ERA IN
THE COUNTRY'S POLITICS, MR KAPWEPWE AND HIS FOUR ASSOCIATES HAVE
PLEDGED LOYALTY TO THE PRESIDENT, PARTY AND GOVERNMENT.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 LUSAKA 02748 101129Z

THE NEW DEVELOPMENT ENDS FOUR YEARS OF POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY AND
INACTIVITY FOR MR KAPWEPWE, WHO IN THE PAST SERVED AS ZAMBIA'S
VICE-PRESIDENT, FOREIGN MINISTER AND MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND HOUSING.

ACCORDING TO REPORTS IN THE PRESS, THE EX-UPP LEADER AND HIS
FOLLOWERS EMERGED OUT OF THEIR MEETING WITH DR KAUNDA WITH BROAD

SMILES AND PLEDGED TO BE LOYAL TO THE UNIP GOVERNMENT.

"FOR THE SAKE OF COMPLETE UNITY IN THE NATION AND FOR THE SITUATION NOW OBTAINING IN THE COUNTRY, WE HAVE FOUND IT IMPERATIVE AND UNAVOIDABLE TO COME BACK AND JOIN FORCES WITH THE PARTY.

"WE THEREFORE CALL UPON ALL FOLLOWERS TO REJOIN THE PARTY", THE PRESIDENT'S SPOKESMAN REPORTED THE FIVE MEN AS SAYING.

MR KAPWEPWE, A BOYHOOD FRIEND OF PRESIDENT KAUNDA, ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION FROM THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT ON AUGUST 21, 1971.

HE HAD EARLIER ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION AS VICE-PRESIDENT IN 1969, BUT WAS PERSUADED TO CHANGE HIS MIND BY DR KAUNDA. HE EVENTUALLY LEFT TOGETHER WITH SEVERAL GOVERNMENT MINISTERS TO HEAD THE NEW POLITICAL PARTY IN 1971.

IN 1972 THE GOVERNMENT DETAINED HIM AND SOME 122 OTHER MEMBERS OF UPP UNDER THE "PRESERVATION OF PUBLIC SECURITY REGULATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT CLAIMED THEN THAT UPP MEMBERS WERE ENGAGED IN GUN-RUNNING AND THE PARTY WAS SUBSEQUENTLY BANNED.

AFTER BEING RELEASED FROM DETENTION ON JANUARY 1, 1973, HE RETURNED TO HIS HOME DISTRICT -- CHINSALI -- IN THE COUNTRY'S NORTHERN REGION TO TAKE UP FARMING. HE HAS BEEN THERE SINCE.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 LUSAKA 02748 101129Z

COMMENTING ON THIS DEVELOPMENT, THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED ZAMBIA DAILY MAIL TODAY WRITES: "WE HAVE NO DOUBT THE RETURN OF MR KAPWEPWE WILL BE GOOD NEWS TO SOME PEOPLE IN UNIP AND BAND NEWS TO OTHERS."

THE NEWSPAPER SAYS THAT THE PAST POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF MR KAPWEPWE AND HIS COLLEAGUES "ARE OF NO CONSEQUENCE IN RELATION TO BOTH THE SHORT AND LONG TERM INTERESTS OF ZAMBIA AND HER PEOPLE AS A WHOLE".

"DURING THESE DAYS OF GREAT NATIONAL STRAINS AND STRESSES WHEN OUR ENEMIES ARE FIGHTING HARD TO HAVE OUR BLOOD, THERE IS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT THEN NATIONAL UNITY," EDITORIALIZES THE MAIL. ITEM USIS.
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